

Message Text

PAGE 01 KUWAIT 00665 01 OF 02 201016Z

10
ACTION SS-30

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R 200600Z FEB 74
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8814
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY UANAA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT POUCH

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KUWAIT 0665

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, MASS, MU
SUBJ: RESPONSE TO OMANI REQUESTS

REF: STATE 26565

SUMMARY: I INFORMED SULTAN THAT US BELIEVED IT SHOULD NOT BECOME INVOLVED IN OMAN AIR DEFENSE NOR IN SALE OF OTHER MILITARY EQUIPMENT EXCEPT WHERE THERE WAS NEED FOR SPECIFIC US ITEMS. SULTAN SAID HE UNDERSTOOD BUT STILL FELT START IN AIR DEFENSE SHOULD BE MADE. HE WAS LOOKING INTO NEW FIGHTER AIRCRAFT (E.G. PHANTOM, MIRAGE MARK V, AND JAGUAR), TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT, AND HELICOPTORS, AS WELL AS SECURITY EQUIPMENT. I URGED HIM TO CONTINUE USE AIRCRAFT WITH WHICH HIS AIRFORCE ALREADY FAMILIAR OR COULD COPE. SULTAN UNHAPPY WITH SAUDI AID AND WORRIED ABOUT "DANGER FROM NORTH", BUT REITERATED THAT HE WELCOMED AID FROM FRIENDLY STATES IN REGION. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE WOULD NOT DESERT HIS PROVEN FRIENDS. HE EXPRESSED HOPE USG WOULD PROVIDE INCREASED AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY THAT OMAN BADLY NEEDED. SAUDI ATTITUDES MAY MAKE IT UNWISE FOR US TO REFUSE TO SELL FIGHTERS TO OMAN.
END SUMMARY
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PAGE 02 KUWAIT 00665 01 OF 02 201016Z

1. QUINLAN AND I HAD HOUR AND FORTY-FIVE MINUTE MEETING WITH SULTAN OF OMAN IN SALALAH FEB 16. FIRST SUBJECT WAS OMANI REQUEST FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT. I TOLD SULTAN I HAD BEEN ASKED CONVEY USG REPLY TO OMANI REQUEST FOR HELP IN AIR DEFENSE AND OTHER POINTS GHASSAN

SHAKIR HAD MADE IN HIS RECENT APPROACH TO DEPT.

2. I SAID SULTAN COULD TAKE FOR GRANTED THAT USG DEEPLY INTERESTED IN OMAN AND ITS SECURITY. QUESTION TO BE ADDRESSED WAS NOT WHETHER USG INTERESTED IN OMAN BUT RATHER HOW US COULD BEST HELP. IT WOULD BE BAD TO DO TOO LITTLE BUT ALSO BAD TO DO TOO MUCH, PARTICULARLY IN MILITARY FIELD AND PARTICULARLY IF IT RESULTED IN COMPETITION WITH BRITISH AND/OR WITH OTHER, HIGHER PRIORITIES. WE FELT ANYTHING US DID SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO EFFECTIVE EFFORTS ALREADY UNDERWAY, AND SHOULD NOT SERVE TO DIFFUSE OR REDIRECT THEM. I OBSERVED THAT US ACTIVITIES SO FAR IN OMAN -- PEACE CORPS, AMERICAN PRIVATE ENTERPRISE, USGS, FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMIN, PORT ADMINISTRATION, SCHOLARSHIPS -- WERE OF GROWING IMPORTANCE AND WERE CONFINED TO VITAL AREAS OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. MILITARY AID, ON OTHER HAND, WAS A MUCH MORE SENSITIVE AND CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECT. WHAT REALLY SHOULD USG DO HERE? I SAID DEPT HAD APPRECIATED SHAKIR'S BRIEFING. DHOFAR WAR APPEARED TO US TO BE GOING WELL THANKS LARGELY TO BRITISH AND TO LESSER EXTENT IRANIANS. PDRY THREAT FROM THE AIR TO DATE DID NOT SEEM TO REQUIRE VERY EXPENSIVE AND COMPLEX AIR DEFENSE, AND I HAD BEEN TOLD BY BRIT AMBASSADOR THAT UK PREPARED TO ASSIST IN AREA OF AIR DEFENSE IN ANY CASE. I ADDED THAT IN GENERAL USG CONTINUED TO VIEW REGIONAL COOPERATION, WITH ASSISTANCE FROM ABU DHABI, JORDAN, SAUDI ARABIA AS WELL AS IRAN, AS IMPORTANT AND BEST IN LONG RUN. US WOULD, HOWEVER, LIKE TO BE RESPONSIVE WHERE THERE WAS DEMONSTRATED NEED FOR PARTICULAR PIECES OF US EQUIPMENT; AND WE THOUGHT THERE WOULD NOT BE A PROBLEM WITH OMANI ASSIGNMENT OF PROCUREMENT OFFICER IN US TO DISCUSS PURCHASE OF SUCH ITEMS FROM TIME TO TIME. FINALLY, I SAID, AS CLEAR DEMONSTRATION OF US INTEREST IN OMAN, WE HOPED BEFORE TOO LONG TO BE ABLE REQUEST SULTAN'S AGREEMENT TO RESIDENT AMERICAN AMBASSADOR.

3. SULTAN REPLIED HE WAS AND ALWAYS WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR ANY HELP USG AND OMAN'S OTHER FRIENDS FELT THEY COULD OFFER. HE SAID HE AGREED COMPLETELY THAT MILITARY ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE GEARED TO
SECRET

PAGE 03 KUWAIT 00665 01 OF 02 201016Z

SPECIFIC NEEDS, NOT ASKED FOR SIMPLY FOR ITS OWN SAKE. SULTAN SAID HE AND HIS ADVISORS WERE CONDUCTING CONTINUING STUDY TO DETERMINE BEST USE OF AVAILABLE MATERIAL AND MONETARY RESOURCES. HE FELT CONFIDENT AND ASSURED OF AMERICAN INTEREST IN OMAN AND AMERICAN WILLINGNESS PROVIDE RIGHT KIND OF HELP.

4. SULTAN SAID HE REMAINED CONVINCED HE NEEDED SOME AIR DEFENSE UP-GRADING BUT HE WOULD AGREE FULLY THAT THERE WAS NO IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENT FOR HIGHLY COMPLEX AND EXPENSIVE GEAR. EACH DEFENSE SYSTEM SHOULD BE "RIGHT FOR ITS TIME". A START IN AIR DEFENSE SHOULD HOWEVER BE MADE. BECAUSE BRITISH WERE THOSE ON SPOT, SULTAN SAID, THEY NATURALLY WANTED EQUIPMENT TO BE BRITISH. HE CERTAINLY DID NOT BLAME BRITISH FOR THIS ATTITUDE, WAS GRATEFUL FOR ALL THEIR HELP, AND WOULD CONTINUE RELY HEAVILY ON THEM.

NEVERTHELESS HE OWED IT TO PEOPLE OF OMAN TO ENSURE THAT HE STUDIED ALL ALTERNATIVES AND EXPENDED SCARCE FUNDS AT COUNTRY'S DISPOSAL IN BEST WAY POSSIBLE.

5. SULTAN SAID BRITISH WERE ADVOCATING RAPIER FOR SURFACE TO AIR MISSILE CAPABILITY AND TWO RADAR SYSTEMS, ONE PORTABLE AND ONE SMALL FIXED RADAR TO BE PLACED EITHER AT MIDWAY OR SALALAH. SULTAN SAID THAT BECAUSE HE HAD BECOME CONVINCED THAT HIS PREVIOUS ANXIETIES ABOUT ADEN'S AIR ATTACK CAPABILITY WERE INDEED EXAGGERATED, HE HAD REDUCED NEW FIGHTER AIRCRAFT REQUIREMENTS FROM TWO TYPES TO ONE. MOST URGENT NEED OF SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES (SAF) WAS FOR INTERCEPTORS AND HE WANTED, HE SAID, TO LOOK INTO THREE SYSTEMS: FRENCH MIRAGE MARK V, BRITISH JAGUAR AND US PHANTOM. ON TRANSPORT SIDE, SULTAN SAID HE HAD BOUGHT ONE DC-9 AND INTENDED TO BUY TWO MORE TO TAKE PLACE OF VISCOUNTS IN SAF'S PRESENT INVENTORY. HE WAS ALSO, HE SAID, INTERESTED IN BUYING MORE HELICOPTERS. PRESENT SAF PROGRAM CALLED FOR THIRTY, AND HE WANTED SOME ADDITIONAL LARGE HELICOPTERS CAPABLE OF LIFTING SMALLER ONES OUT OF BATTLE ZONE WHEN THEY WERE KNOCKED DOWN. HELICOPTERS WERE VERY MUCH ON HIS MIND, SULTAN SAID, FOR USE IN MUSANDAM AREA OF COUNTRY AS WELL AS DHOFAR. FINALLY, SULTAN SAID, HE WOULD REQUIRE SOME SPECIAL ADDITIONAL SECURITY EQUIPMENT SUCH AS SENSORS, AND SOME NAVAL BOATS.

SECRET

PAGE 01 KUWAIT 00665 02 OF 02 201029Z

17
ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W
----- 100646

R 200600Z FEB 74
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8815
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY SANAA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT POUCH

S E C R E T FINAL SECTION OF 2 KUWAIT 0665

EXDIS

6. I TOLD SULTAN MY FRANK OPINION WAS THAT PHANTOM WAS WRONG AIRCRAFT FOR SAF. IT WAS TOO COMPLEX, EXPENSIVE AND NOT APPROPRIATE FOR THREAT FROM PDY AS PRESENTLY ASSESSED. PERSONALLY, I SAID, I WOULD SUGGEST THAT SAF STICK TO AIRCRAFT THAT ITS AIRFORCE PERSONNEL KNEW ALREADY OR COULD READILY FAMILIARIZE

THDMSELVES WITH SINCE THEY WERE THE ONES WHO WOULD BE FLYING AND MAINTAINING THEM. SULTAN SAID PHANTOM OF COURSE "HAD THE REPUTATION" BUT HE WOULD ACCEPT MY STATEMENT THAT THERE MIGHT BE OTHER AIRCRAFT MORE SUITABLE TO SAF RIGHT NOW.

7. SULTAN EXPRESSED UNHAPPINESS AND FRUSTRATION WITH SAUDIS OVER THEIR CONTINUED WITHHOLDING OF MILITARY AID. HE BELIEVED SAUDI MINDEF PRINCE SULTAN WAS MAIN STUMBLING BLOCK AND OBSERVED THAT IF SAUDI MINDEF DID NOT WISH IT TO APPEAR AS THOUGH SAUDI AID WAS BEING FUNNELED THROUGH BRITISH, "SAUDIS SHOULD DEAL DIRECTLY WITH ME. THE ASSISTANCE I RECEIVE WILL BE USED BY THOSE ACTUALLY DOING THE FIGHTING; IF BRITISH ARE THE ONLY ONES FIGHTING, IT WILL BE USED BY BRITISH; IF OTHERS ARE PARTICIPATING, THE EQUIPMENT WILL BE USED BY THEM." SULTAN SAID HE PLANNED TO SEE FAISAL AT ISLAMIC CONFERENCE AND ASK HIM DIRECTLY FOR AID. (HE ALSO WANTED TO DROP HINT THAT HE WOULD PREFER THAT SAUDI
SECRET

PAGE 02 KUWAIT 00665 02 OF 02 201029Z

AMBASSADOR TO MUSCAT SUGHAIR, WHO IS OUTSPOKENLY ANTI-BRITISH, BE REPLACED.) SULTAN SAID HE HAD DEVELOPED FEELING THAT NUMBER OF ARAB COUNTRIES DID NOT REALLY WANT DHOFAR WAR TO END. I REPLIED THAT WAS INTERESTING STATEMENT SINCE SOME OF THOSE COUNTRIES ACCUSED BRITISH OF PRECISELY SAME THING. SULTAN SMILED AND SAID PLOY OF BLAMING SOMEONE ELSE AS COVER FOR ONE'S OWN POSITION WAS NOT UNKNOWN IN ARAB WORLD.

8. SULTAN SAID HE WAS WORRIED ABOUT "DANGER FROMDZHE NORTH". UAE PRES ZAYYID WAS NOT BAD MAN HIMSELF, BUT HE ACTING UNWISELY IN REPEATEDLY SHAKING UP HIS INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, AND SURROUNDING HIMSELF WITH BEWILDERING ARRAY OF ADVISERS EACH WITH DIFFERENT ADVICE. UAE FONMIN SUWEIDI WAS TRYING MAKE OF HIMSELF ANOTHER QADHAFI. BAHRAIN EXPERIMENT WITH DEMOCRACY WAS ANOTHER DISTURBING DEVELOPMENT. DEMOCRACY PER SE WAS NOT BAD, BUT IF IT DID NOT EVOLVE IN MEASURED WAY, IT OFFERED DANGEROUS OPENING FOR INSTABILITY IN GULF AREA AS WHOLE. I SUGGESTED TO SULTAN THAT IF HE SAW PROMSIING OPENING, HE MENTION TO KING FAISAL DESIRABILITY OF SAUDI-UAE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO BORDER DIFFERENCES. SULTAN AGREED WITH ME NORMAL SAUDI-UAE RELATIONS WOULD IMPROVE PROSPECTS FOR STABILITY IN UAE, WHICH ITSELF WAS KEY GULF STATE, AND HE WOULD TRY FIND WAY OF RAISING SUBJECT WITH FAISAL.

9. CONCLUDING THIS PART OF TALK, SULTAN SAID HE WELCOMED REGIONAL COOPERATION AND AID FROM FRIENDLY STATES IN AREA. HOWEVER, HE NOT RPT NOT ABOUT TO DESERT "THOSE FRIENDS WHO CAME TO US IN HOUR OF NEED." IF SAUDIS, KUWAITIS AND THOSE OTHERS WHO WERE CRITICAL OF BRITISH AND IRANIAN MILITARY HELP OFFERED THE TYPE AND LEVEL OF ASSISTANCE NEEDED TO HELP OMAN SOLVE ITS INSURGENCY PROBLEM, SULTAN SAID, HE PREPARED TO DEPEND MORE ON THEM. "IN MEANTIME WE KNOW OUR FRIENDS AND WILL STICK BY THEM." SULTAN SAID AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY IN MANY FIELDS ALSO BADLY NEEDED IN OMAN, AND HOPED US WOULD BE WILLING TO PROVIDE IT. I REITERATED

US INTEREST IN WELFARE OF OMAN AND SAID WE WOULD BE CONTINUING TO SEEK WAYS US COULD APPROPRIATELY HELP.

10. COMMENT: SULTAN WAS FAR LOWER KEY WITH ME REGARDING NEED FOR AMERICAN WEAPONS THAN SHAKIR APPARENTLY WAS WITH DEPT, AND HE REPEATEDLY SPOKE WARMLY AND GRATEFULLY OF BRITISH. HE CLEARLY DOES HOWEVER FEEL HE NOW HAS NEW OPTIONS IN MILITARY
SECRET

PAGE 03 KUWAIT 00665 02 OF 02 201029Z

AS WELL AS TRADE AND COMMERCIAL FIELD, AND HE IS PROBING FOR US WILLINGNESS SELL SOME MAJOR WEAPONS SYSTEMS IN ADDITION TO SMALL ITEMS - MAINLY FIGHTERS AND HELICOPTERS SO FAR. BEFORE WE DECIDE TO SAY NO ON THESE ITEMS WE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT OMANIS ARE GOING TO BE INCREASINGLY EXPOSED TO US EQUIPMENT THROUGH IRANIAN -- AND MAYBE SOME DAY SAUDI - PARTICIPATION IN MILITARY OPERATIONS AND PROCUREMENT FOR GOO. OMANI INTEREST IN MORE US HELICOPTERS IS ALREADY VERY EVIDENT. MOREOVER, JUDGING FROM SAUDI MINDEF'S REPORTED UNWILLINGNESS ASSOCIATE SAUDI EFFORT IN OMAN WITH BRITISH, HE MIGHT NOT WANT ANY SAUDI CASH DONATIONS SPENT ON BRITISH ARMS. IF THIS IS CORRECT, WE MIGHT EVENTUALLY HAVE TO DECIDE BETWEEN SELLING SAUDI-FINANCED US FIGHTERS AND OTHER ITEMS TO OMAN AND HAVING SAUDIS CONTINUE BALK AT PROVIDING BIG AID TO OMAN.
STOLTZFUS

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